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RELIEF AS INDONESIA LIFTS BAN ON PALM OIL EXPORT

In a major relief for India's FMCG sector, exports will resume on Monday, almost a month after the ban went into effect

PRICE FALL IN LOCAL MARKET BEHIND DECISION

Indonesian President Joko Widodo said palm oil's price has fallen from $1.35 per litre to about $1.17 since the ban, which was meant to increase its local supply and reduce the domestic price. The war in Ukraine, which accounts for nearly half of the world's sunflower oil, had put pressure on the global supply of cooking oil, making palm oil prices jump

DOMESTIC SUPPLY TRIPLES: WIDODO

- Once Indonesia announced its export ban, the price of palm oil shot up 200%, putting pressure on India, which imports about 8.5 million tonnes of the commodity annually
- Indonesian leader said the ban has helped triple the supply of palm oil from 64,500 tons to 2,11,000 tons per month

60%
OF WORLD'S PALM OIL COMES FROM INDONESIA

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TIRUCHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

GST Council's decisions not binding: SC

Says Parliament, assemblies free to legislate on it; experts fear it would trigger fresh face-off with Centre

MONIKA YADAV @ New Delhi

THE Supreme Court opened a can of worms on Thursday when in the course of delivering a verdict in a case, it held that the GST Council's recommendations have only persuasive value and are not binding.

"The Parliament and the state legislatures possess simultaneous powers to legislate on GST. Article 246A of the Constitution does not envisage a repugnancy provision to resolve the inconsistencies between the Central and state laws on GST. The recommendations of the GST Council are the product of a collaborative dialogue involving the Union and states. They are recommendatory in nature," the court observed.

The bench made the observation while upholding a Gujarat High Court order to revoke Integrated GST (IGST) on ocean freight from Indian importers. It held that the IGST paid on ocean freight is unconstitutional and those who have already paid it will be eligible for refund.

Some state finance ministers from non-BJP states had in the past questioned the authority of the GST Council and even termed the GST (in its current form and shape) as against the federalism. In May 2021, Tamil Nadu Finance Minister Palanivel Thiagarajan had berated the GST system and council saying they function with an omnipotent and all-encompassing mandate not envisioned in the Constitution.

Tax experts believe the SC's observation might increase the state vs Centre tussle on many GST issues. Mahesh Jaising, Partner, Deloitte India said, "This would have far reaching implications on various other matters where states are not in agreement with the decisions of the GST Council, especially in light of the compensation period coming to an end in June."

Article 279A of the Constitution specifies that the GST Council will only make recommendations to states and the Centre on taxes, cesses and surcharge levied by them, which may be subsumed in the GST Act.

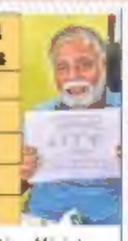
However, Sushil Modi, who has played a crucial role in shaping the GST as a member of the council while he was finance minister of Bihar, says the court's observation will not make much of a difference. "The Supreme Court's ruling is not new. It is already there in the Constitution. There won't be any adverse implication of this amendment as no state would like to deviate from the majority for the fear of being at disadvantage or being singled out," he said.

DIALOGUE IN FEDERALISM

"Indian federalism is a dialogue between cooperative and uncooperative federalism where the federal units are at liberty to use different means of persuasion," the ruling said

FLYING COLOURS

Number of students	Total marks
309	624
472	623
615	622
706	624
773	620



Education Minister BC Nagesh announces SSLC results

STUDENTS | FULL MARKS

19,125 FIRST LANGUAGE

13,458 SECOND LANGUAGE | **43,126** THIRD LANGUAGE | **13,683** MATHS

6,592 SCIENCE | **50,782** SOCIAL SCIENCE

85.63% pass SSLC exam, highest in a decade

SHILPA P @ Bengaluru

THE Secondary School Leaving Certificate (SSLC) exams 2022 recorded the highest pass percentage in ten years with 85.63 per cent of a total of 8,53,436 students passing the exams.

Minister for Primary and Secondary Education, BC Nagesh, on Thursday announced although the pass percentage was 99.99 per cent in SSLC 2021, the students were extended concessions through an official assurance that none of the students appearing for the exams would fail in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic affecting the education system.

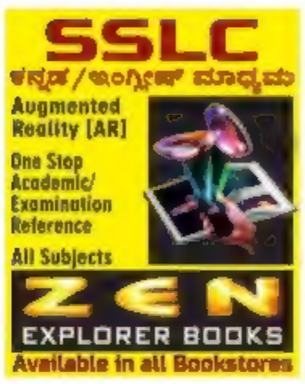
In the last regular exams conducted in 2020, as many as 72.42 per cent students had passed, he said.

Of the total 7,30,881 of the 8,53,436 students who passed, 3,68,579 (92.44 per cent) were girls and 3,52,752 (86.34 per cent) were boys. However, Nagesh said this year the exams were student-friendly. While earlier at least 20 per cent of the questions were tough, this year only 10 per cent of the questions were difficult.

As many as 40,061 students have been promoted with grace marks, including 35,931 students in one subject, 3,940 students in two subjects and 190 students in three subjects. P4

145 students score full marks, 24 from B'luru

Bengaluru: As many as 145 students, including 21 students from government schools, have scored cent per cent marks in SSLC exams held this year. Of 145 students, 24 are from Bengaluru. P4



Court nod for Mathura mosque case

ENS @ Lucknow

AMID the ongoing litigation on the Gyanvapi mosque in Varanasi, a Mathura district court on Thursday allowed petitions seeking removal of the Shahi Idgah Masjid abutting the Shree Krishna Janmabhoomi temple.

"The suit to remove the Shahi Idgah mosque on the ground that it was built over the Krishna Janmabhoomi land is maintainable," district judge Rajeev Bharti said, overturning a civil court's order dismissing a bunch of petitions demanding it.

"Right to sue of the plaintiff will stand restored. Case will be restored at its original number," the district court said in its order.

The order came on a revision petition filed by deities Bhagwan Shrikrishna Virajman of Katra Keshav Dev temple and Asthan Shri Krishna Janmbhoomi, through next of friends Ranjana Agnihotri and six others challenging the dismissal order.

In all, three lawsuits were filed.

Structure found in Gyanvapi resembles Shivalinga: Survey

NAMITA BAJPAI @ Lucknow

A report of a court-ordered survey conducted in the Gyanvapi mosque on May 14-16, which was submitted to a Varanasi civil court on Thursday, claims a black stone cylindrical structure found in the middle of the *wuzu* (ablution) pond on the premises resembled a Shivalinga, highly placed sources said.

As soon as the cylindrical structure became visible to the court-appointed commission, the plaintiffs and their lawyers started calling it a Shivalinga while the mosque authorities termed it a fountain that was defunct for years, the report adds.

Sources citing the report said the mosque staff failed to give a definite timeline on when the fountain became defunct. Initially, they claimed it was not working for the last 20 years but then they scaled down the figure to 12 years. The mosque staff also failed to make it operational when asked to do so.

On top of the cylindrical structure is an half-inch thick white layer whose radius is 9 inch and has five equal parts. A narrow 63 cm deep hole was noticed at the centre of the cylindrical structure, but the survey team found no arrangement for a water supply pipe for the fountain to function. Sources claimed the cylindrical structure was 2.5 ft high with a radius of 4 ft at the base. The report says when layers of moss deposited over that structure were removed, its black colour became visible.

The survey report also mentions the ground plan, zig-zag cuts inside domes of the mosque and the main *mandaps*, which matched the map of ground plan of the Aadi Visheshwar temple as printed in multiple books, said sources.

During the survey, a *swastik* was found on the inner wall near the south pole of the main dome, sources said. Symbols of three *damroos* were reportedly spotted at the main gate of the mosque. In the north-west direction, a 15 ft x15 ft basement was spotted and it was reportedly covered with debris. Stones lying in the debris had images resembling the architecture of north Indian temples.

The survey report referred to a 3ft deep pond having 30 taps all around it. At a distance of 83 ft from the pond, an idol resembling Nandi was found.

The report also mentions images of *trishul*, snake, bells, betel leaves, elephants, bases for housing idols of deities the survey team found, said sources. P9

Report submitted

15-PAGE report of court-ordered survey of Gyanvapi mosque submitted to Varanasi judge

THREE sealed boxes containing maps, chips of still photos and video clips of the survey conducted on May 6 and 7, and May 14 to 16 part of the documentation

EIGHT 32 GB chips, 1,500 frames of still photographs and 10 hours of video recordings in the sealed boxes

NAVJOT SINGH SIDHU GETS 1-YR JAIL TERM

New Delhi: Observing that consequences of loss of temper must be borne, the Supreme Court on Thursday enhanced the sentence of Congress leader Navjot Singh Sidhu to one-year rigorous imprisonment in a 1988 road rage incident in which a 65-year-old man had died. Sidhu, 58, took to Twitter to say he "will submit to the majesty of law" as the cricketer-turned-politician rode an elephant in Patiala earlier in the day to register a symbolic protest against rising prices of essential commodities.

EXPRESS READ

MEA: China building second bridge on its own land

New Delhi: A day after reports emerged that China was building a second bridge across Pangong Tso in eastern Ladakh, India on Thursday said the area where the reported construction is being undertaken is under the occupation of that country for decades.

Nikhat Zareen wins gold at World Boxing Championships

New Delhi: Indian boxer Nikhat Zareen emerged world champion with a comfortable 5-0 victory over Thailand's Jitpong Jutamas in the flyweight (52kg) final of the Women's World Championships in Istanbul on Thursday.

CM faces angry residents in rain-hit areas

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

TWO days after state capital Bengaluru witnessed the second-highest single day rains in May after 1909, which almost brought the city to a halt, Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai on Thursday inspected various developmental projects and low-lying rain-affected areas, even as residents used the opportunity to voice their woes.

After the inspection rounds, the CM took officials of the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) to task, mincing no words to let them know about their lackadaisical approach to completing works in time.

Bommai visited JC Road and HBR Layout 4th Block where residents voiced their frustrations with yearly problems caused by the rains and maintenance failures. While speaking to the CM, many complained that rajakaluves and other drains had not been maintained properly and were repeatedly blocking and causing overflows. "We have waited many years for these issues to be fixed, but the progress is very slow. Now we have to suffer whenever it rains," the residents told the Chief Minister. P2

CM SLAMS BBMP OFFICIALS

Bengaluru: A visibly irritated CM Basavaraj Bommai lashed out at BBMP officials soon after the city rounds on Thursday. He minced no words and took the officials to task at the meeting convened at his home office Krishna.

SIDDU FLAYS GOVT ON RAIN WOES

Bengaluru: The government is claiming to have developed roads and drains in Bengaluru, and spent Rs 160 crore to desilt drains. Where is the silt which was removed and transported? asked opposition leader Siddaramaiah

Citizens voice their grievances during CM Basavaraj Bommai's visit to rain-hit areas on Thursday | SRIKANTH RH

Brand Bengaluru is taking a beating due to rain woes which can drive away investors. Drainage system also needs to be improved

SM Krishna, ex-CM

The BJP government should maintain the dignity of Bengaluru city. The BJP is only holding an umbrella and doing city rounds

DK Shivakumar, KPCC president

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